



April 3, 2025

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and members of the committee,

My name is Debra Pennington Davis, and I am the Restorative Justice Coordinator for Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center. Six Rivers is a nonprofit community dispute resolution center that serves Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler Counties. I am testifying in strong support of the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program, and I respectfully ask that you allocate \$8 million for the next biennium to ensure the continued success of this vital program.

In 2022, Six Rivers received funding from the CJC's Restorative Justice Grant Program to design and implement a survivor-centered restorative justice program. With the guidance of local system partners and community service providers, we worked to build a program that centers accountability, safety, and healing—and meets the unique needs of our rural Gorge communities. We also partnered with New York University's Center on Violence and Recovery to adopt their Circles of Peace restorative justice model, which aims to address the root causes of violence and prevent future harm. Circles of Peace is an evidence-informed model that has been rigorously studied for over 20 years. It consistently demonstrates high survivor satisfaction rates and a significant decrease in recidivism.

In April of 2024, we launched our pilot Circles of Peace program. We accept cases involving multiple harm types and currently receive referrals from District Attorney's offices, juvenile departments, and an intertribal police department. A year after launching, our program is full, and we have begun a waitlist for new cases. We regularly hear appreciation from participants for the opportunity to make meaningful changes in their lives.

While still in the early stages, our program already demonstrates significant cost savings for the state. Take "Tim," a single dad involved in a serious assault with a long-time friend. The friend preferred the Circles of Peace program over the criminal justice system because he felt it was important for Tim to learn from his mistakes. Before being enrolled in Circles of Peace, Tim was expecting to serve five years in prison, which would have cost the state an estimated \$260,000. Instead, through Circles of Peace, Tim is currently learning new skills, understanding the impact of his actions, and working to repair harm. He can also care for his children and be employed, all while reducing the burden on local courts, and all for a fraction of the cost of incarceration.

As we see firsthand the positive impact of restorative justice, I urge you to continue funding this important and cost-effective program. Please allocate \$8 million to the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program and include it in the CJC's current service level budget. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Debra Pennington Davis

